

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 14421 192316Z

12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EUR-25 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SR-02 ORM-03 SAB-01 DRC-01

/146 W

----- 048590

R 191528Z DEC 73 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5730
INFO USINT ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BONN
USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL MANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 14421

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ETRN, XF, LE, SY

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ROME AIRPORT MASSACRE

SUMMARY: LEBANESE AND LOCAL PALESTINIANS GENERALLY REVOLTED
AT ROME AIRPORT ATTACK, AND EVEN FEDAYEEN EXPRESSIONS OF CONDEMNATION
APPEAR CARRY SOME RING OF SINCERITY. END SUMMARY.

1. LEBANESE PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL REACTION TO DEC. 17 MASSACRE AT
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 14421 192316Z

ROME AIRPORT IS ONE OF UNIVERSAL DISMAY AND REVULSION, WITH MANY OF

OUR CONTACTS OPENLY DESCRIBING IT AS "FILTHY", "SHAMEFUL" AND SERIOUS SETBACK FOR ARAB CAUSE AND IMAGE IN FOREIGN EYES. LOCAL PALESTINIANS WITH WHOM WE IN TOUCH--INCLUDING SOME WITH FEDAYEEN CONNECTIONS OR PRO-FEDAYEEN SYMPATHIES--EXPRESSING SIMILAR VIEWS, WITH A FEW GOING SO FAR AS TO BLAME PLO LEADERSHIP FOR NOT DOING MORE TO SEEK OUT AND PUNISH "INSANE" ELEMENTS RESPONSIBLE. BELIEF IS WIDESPREAD THAT ROME ATTACK AND SUBSEQUENT LUFTHANSA HIJACKING WERE DESIGNED POISON ATMOSPHERE AT GENEVA PEACE TALKS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED BEGIN DEC. 18. LOCAL PRESS REACTION (SEPTTEL) GENERALLY RUNS ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

2. OFFICIAL GOL ATTITUDE WAS VOICED DEC. 18 BY TRANSPORT MINISTER FOUAD GHOSN WHO, IN PUBLICLY JUSTIFYING GOVT'S POLICY OF NOT PERMITTING HIJACKED PLANES TO LAND AT BEIRUT AIRPORT, TOOK OCCASION TO " CONDEMN THIS ACT (ROME MURDERS) WHICH IS JUSTIFIED NEITHER IN TERMS OF HUMANITY NOR IN TERMS OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE". (HAD LUFTHANSA PLANE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO LAND HERE, WE UNDERSTAND LEBANESE SECURITY OFFICIALS PLANNED TO ASSULT AIRCRAFT AND KILL OR CAPTURE HIJACKERS AT ANY COST.) ONLY OTHER NOTABLE COMMENT CAME FROM "PROGRESSIVE" LEADER KAMAL JUMBLATT, WHO CONDEMNED ROME MASSACRE AS "GRAVE ACT OF BARBARISM WHICH VIOLATES BASIC PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT FOR LIVES OF INNOCENT TRAVELERS".

3. FEDAYEEN REACTION: 'ARAFAT, IN DAMASCUS DEC. 17 TO MEET PRES. ASSAD, WAS QUOTED AS EXPRESSING "CONTEMPT" OVER ROME ATTACK, WHILE FATAH'S SALAH KHALAF PUBLICLY CONDEMNED IT FOR TAKING INNOCENT LIVES AND BEING HARMFUL TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE. OFFICIAL PLO STATEMENT EXPRESSING SAME SENTIMENTS AND DENYING AND CONNECTION WITH ROME INCIDENT WAS ISSUED HERE SAME DAY (BIS M171858). PLO (Wafa) DAILY BULLETIN DEC. 17 AND 18 TOOK PAINS TO DISSOCIATE FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT FROM "MURDER OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AT ROME", CONDEMNING ENTIRE AFFAIR AS " CONSPIRATORIAL ACT AIMED AT DISTORTING TRUE PICTURE OF PALESTINE REVOLUTION" AND UNCHARACTERISTIC OF "HUMANITARIAN ATTITUDES SHOWN BY PALESTINIAN PEOPLE THROUGHOUT HISTORY". PDFLP ISSUED TWO STATEMENTS OF ITS OWN CONDEMNING "THIS DIRTY, CRIMINAL AND UNJUSTIFIED ACT WHICH CONSTITUTES GRAVE INJURY TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE." SA'IQA HAS ALSO PUBLICLY CONDEMNED ROME ATTACK (ALTHOUGH TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE DAMASCUS RADIO AND SARG SPOKESMEN HAVE MADE NO COMMENT AT ALL). ON DEC. 18 'ARAFAT REPORTEDLY SENT CABLE OF CONDOLENCES TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 14421 192316Z

MOROCCO'S KING HASSAN IN WHICH HE CONDEMNED OPERATION AS "IMMORAL" AND "PERPETRATED... BY OUTSIDERS WHO TRYING DISTORT OUR NATION'S STRUGGLE BY MURDERING INNOCENT PEOPLE". WE ALSO UNDERSTAND PLO DELEGATION VISITED ITALIAN EMBASSY AT DAMASCUS DEC. 18 TO EXTEND PLO EX COMM'S CONDOLENCES.

4. COMMENT: ABOVE FEDAYEEN REACTION, ESPECIALLY EFFORT TO DISCLAIM PLO CONNECTION WITH AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ROME

TERRORISTS, IS WHAT WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT FROM FEDAYEEN
SPOKESMEN FOLLOWING INCIDENTS OF THIS KIND. ON THIS OCCASION,
HOWEVER, FEDAYEEC EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET AND CONDEMNATION APPEAR
CARRY GREATER RING OF SINCERITY THAN USUAL. IT ALSO NOTEWORTHY
THAT PFLP, WHICH FOR SOME TIME PAST HAS BEEN QUICK TO CMNDEM
AND DENY CONNECTION WITH TERRORIST ACTS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL
AVIATION, HAS THIS TIME REMAINED SILENT--EXCEPT FOR HABASH'S HARD-
LINE, ANTI-PEACE CONFERENCE SPEECH OF DEC 17 (BEIRUT 14362).
DECON 12/19/74.
BUFFUM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT HIJACKING, PARAMILITARY FORCES, PERSONAL OPINION, AIRPORTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BEIRUT14421
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731217/aaaaambz.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Oct-2001 by hilburpw>; APPROVED <16-Oct-2001 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO ROME AIRPORT MASSACRE SUMMARY: LEBANESE AND LOCAL PALESTINIANS GENERALLY REVOLTED
TAGS: PINS, ETRN, XF, LE, SY, IT, PLO, FEDAYEEN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005